

THE ENGINE ROOM

Terms of Reference: Regional Research - Consultants April 2026

Position Title: Regional Research - Consultant (x3)

Contract Duration: 11 days, over the period of 2 months.

Day rate: 350 USD.

Location: Remote

About the Engine Room

The Engine Room works to strengthen the fight for social justice by supporting civil society to use technology and data in strategic, effective and responsible ways. We partner with human rights defenders, activists, journalists, and community organisations to conduct rigorous and ethical research that centers the needs and knowledge of communities most affected by the issues we study and at the frontlines of justice work across the Majority World.

We are seeking three experienced qualitative researchers, each based in one of our target regions: South Asia, South East Asia and South West Asia and North Africa to support multilingual desk research and primary research for a research project at the intersections of AI and climate action.

About the project: AI and climate action

In 2026, we will be implementing a project focused on AI and climate action. While AI tools are increasingly being developed and deployed globally to address social and environmental challenges, dominant narratives AI tends to center on the role of high-cost or resource-intensive solutions from large technology companies, obscuring our understanding of initiatives that embody different values, respond to diverse contexts and illustrate how other ways of building, governing and engaging with AI are possible.

Our research seeks to challenge those dominant narratives by surfacing the plurality, creativity, and diversity of AI applications for climate action emerging from Majority World contexts. We are interested in mapping context-responsive systems, such as frugal, small or edge AI, used in climate action and governed by communities most affected by climate change, as well as the factors shaping community-centered AI adoption. By mapping this landscape and the decision-making processes that inform AI adoption, we want to contribute towards reframing what counts as innovation and whose knowledge and practice are made visible in global conversations about AI and climate.

About the role

We are seeking three experienced qualitative researchers to support this project as consultants. The roles involve conducting multilingual desk and primary research focused on South Asia, South East Asia or South West Asia and North Africa. Consultants will draw on strong contextual knowledge of the region to identify relevant case studies, conduct interviews, and synthesize findings in regional languages. They will collaborate with The Engine Room team throughout the project and contribute to producing research outputs in English.

Qualifications

All candidates should demonstrate the following:

- Demonstrable experience in qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews and/or desk research and a commitment to ethical research practices. This experience can be grounded in past experience with academic research, journalism, storytelling or related fields.
- Fluency in one or more relevant languages, with the ability to engage directly with participants (see additional requirements below)
- Experience conducting multilingual research, including data collection and analysis in local languages, and a demonstrated ability to synthesize findings into clear English outputs.
- Knowledge of or experience with the topic working at the intersections of AI, technology, climate change or climate justice.
- Familiarity with risks faced by environmental activists and civil society actors in each region is desirable.
- Ability to work independently and manage deadlines in a remote, part-time context.

Additional requirements for regional positions

Researcher: South East Asia

- Fluency in relevant regional languages (e.g. Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Malaysia, Thai, Vietnamese or others).
- Experience working with communities in Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand or neighbouring countries.

Researcher: South Asia

- Fluency in relevant regional languages (e.g. Bengali, Hindi, Urdu or others).
- Experience working with communities in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, or the broader South Asian region, particularly in relation to surveillance, censorship, or digital security threats.

Researcher: South West Asia and North Africa

- Fluency in relevant regional languages (E.g. Arabic and French)
- Strong contextual knowledge of the region and experience working with communities in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, and Jordan.

Scope of services

The consultant is expected to complete the following tasks:

Desk research (3 days)

- Conduct secondary research in local languages to document AI tools and initiatives for climate action emerging from Majority World contexts, including grey literature, reports, academic publications and news sources.
- Synthesize findings in summaries in English, including translated excerpts and surfacing regional and contextual nuances relevant to how communities in each context understand AI in relation to the context and climate challenges to support the case study selection process.

Interviews (4.75 days)

- Support the identification and recruitment of interview participants, developing culturally appropriate recruitment materials and consent documentation in local languages, with attention to participant safety and meaningful informed consent.
- Conduct one-on-one interviews in local languages with representatives of identified initiatives.
- Contribute to the analysis of qualitative data collected through desk research and interviews, using thematic coding

Case study development (3.5 days)

- Contribute to the development of case study write-ups and other research outputs.

Interested candidates should submit a CV and a writing sample to hr@theengineroom.org. Please do not submit a cover letter.